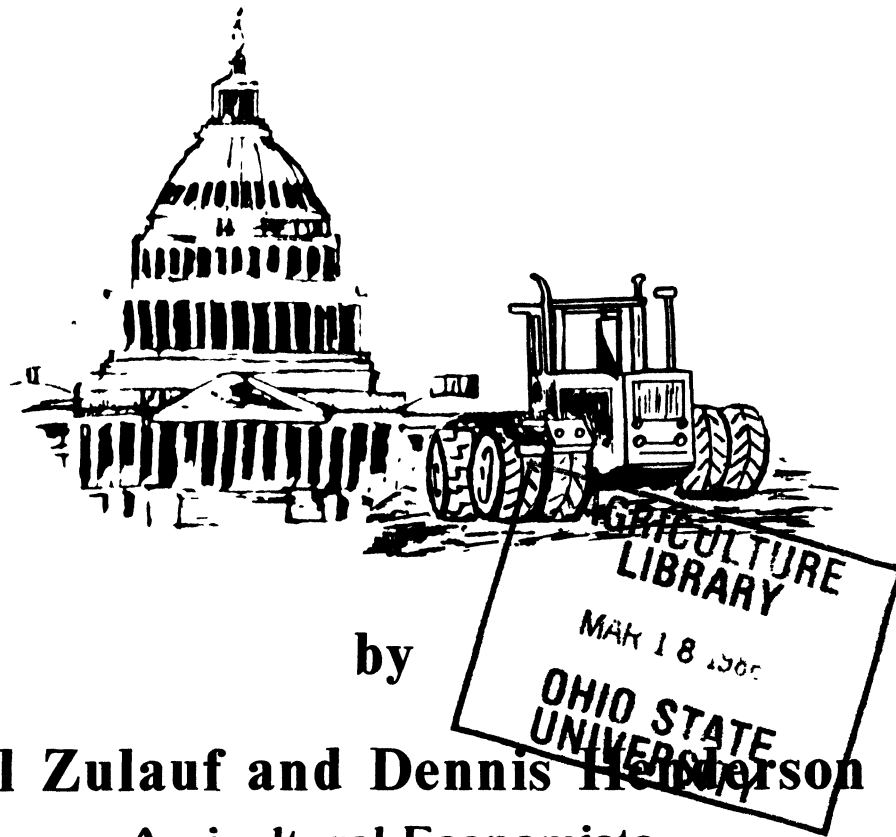


GOVERNMENT AND AGRICULTURE: OPINIONS OF OHIO FARMERS



by

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Government and Agriculture: Opinions of Ohio Farmers

High interest rates, budget deficits, PIK, financial distress, and expensive farm programs are but a few of the factors which have combined to create substantial interest in Federal farm policy and the 1985 Farm Bill. Options proposed have ranged from mandatory farm participation in land set aside programs to elimination of all price and income support programs. Whatever the outcome of this debate, farm operators will ultimately be affected. Therefore, to obtain a picture of Ohio farmers' opinions concerning issues surrounding the 1985 farm legislation, a random sample of Ohio farm operators was surveyed in March 1984. Topics covered included the general direction of farm policy, production controls, conservation initiatives, price supports, Federal farm credit programs, international trade, and Federal budget deficits.

Ohio Farm Operator Sample

Two thousand Ohio farm operators were randomly selected for the survey. Usable responses numbered 424, yielding a 21 percent response rate. The questionnaire along with the responses are presented in Appendix Figure 1.

Characteristics of the respondents were generally similar to those for Ohio farm operators as reported in the 1982 Census of Agriculture. Over 50 percent of respondents were older than 50, approximately 50 percent annually grossed \$40,000 or less from farming, and grains were the dominant source of farm income. For 43 percent of respondents off-farm employment and investments provided less than 25 percent of total family income while for 21 percent off-farm employment and investments provided more than 75 percent of total family income (Question 20, Appendix Figure 1). A notable difference between

the survey and Census characteristics was the larger average farm size of survey respondents. Survey respondents farmed 372 acres on average in 1983 while the Census reported an average farm size of 177 acres.

One farm operator characteristic collected by the survey but not reported in the 1982 Census was the debt-to-asset ratio. Tremendous diversity was found. While 41 percent of respondents reported a debt-to-asset ratio of zero, i.e., no debt, 12 percent had a ratio greater than 50 percent (Table 1). Furthermore, the distribution varied substantially by farm size. Whereas six percent of respondents with gross sales of \$40,000 or less reported a debt-to-asset ratio greater than 50 percent, the comparable figure for farm operators with gross sales over \$200,000 was 37 percent. These figures parallel national statistics.

Under most situations, it is commonly believed that a debt-to-asset ratio of 50 percent signifies financial stress. Using this criterion, approximately 12 percent of all Ohio farm operators are experiencing appreciable stress. But, for the largest farmers the proportion jumps to 37 percent. (Additional analysis of the debt-to-asset ratio of Ohio farmers is being conducted at present and will be reported in the near future. Contact the authors if you have questions concerning this analysis.)

In summary, the survey respondents appear to be representative of the Ohio farm operator population. The only exception is a greater than proportional representation of larger farmers among sample respondents. This overrepresentation is common among respondents to surveys of farm operators and was expected.

TABLE 1. Debt-to-Asset Ratio of Farm Operators by Gross Annual Farm Sales, Ohio, March 1984.

Annual Gross Farm Sales ^a	Debt-to-Asset Ratio					No Response	Total ^b
	0	1-25	26-50	51-74	75+		
(dollars)	percent ^c						
40,000 or less	58	26	9	5	1	1	100
40,001-99,999	27	34	24	9	5	1	100
100,000-199,999	19	39	26	9	7	0	100
200,000+	6	25	31	31	6	0	100
All Farmers	41	29	17	9	3	2	100

^a Annual gross farm sales in recent years.

^b Total may not add to 100 due to rounding.

^c Percents are based on the following number of respondents by categories:
\$40,000 or less, 206; \$40,001-99,999, 106; \$100,000-199,999, 54; \$200,000+,
32; and all farmers, 424.

Source: Original survey data.

Opinions Concerning the General Orientation of Farm Programs

Among Ohio farm operators there appears to be significant discontent with the current farm program, composed of price support, government storage, and voluntary set aside provisions. This program might be thought of as a safety net role for government. Among survey respondents only 33 percent preferred continuation of the present program after 1985 (Table 2). The present program, however, received a plurality. The next most frequently mentioned general approach (29 percent) was elimination of all set aside, price support, and government storage programs. This approach favors getting government out of farm policy. A mandatory set aside program was preferred by 17 percent of respondents while an acreage allotment/marketing quota program was the choice of 10 percent. These two options, picked by 27 percent of respondents, reflect a supply management role for government. In summary, the survey respondents were almost evenly divided between those who preferred supply management, those who endorsed a safety net of government programs, and those who wanted government entirely out of farm policy. Thus, even though discontent was obvious with the current programs even more disagreement existed over the choice of alternatives.

Little difference in opinions was evident when respondents were separated into categories by most important source of income, debt-to-asset ratio, percent of family income coming from off-farm employment and investments, or membership in a general farm versus commodity organization. In contrast, opinions did vary by farm size, especially when measured by acres farmed. Specifically, as farm size increased, support for present farm programs increased, while support for elimination of government programs declined (Table 2). This relationship may reflect a greater importance of government

Table 2. Opinion of Farm Operators Concerning General Direction of 1985 National Farm Bill by Farm Size, Ohio, March 1984.

Farm Size ^a (acres)	Farm Program						Total ^c
	Present Program	Mandatory Set-Aside ^b	Acreage Allotment/ Marketing Quotas	No Support Program	Other Program	Undecided/ No Response	
			- - - percent ^d	- - -			
1-99	29	18	7	32	5	9	100
100-249	33	12	6	34	3	13	100
250-499	35	19	11	31	3	2	100
500-999	38	17	17	13	6	8	100
1000+	48	22	7	11	4	8	100
All farmers	33	17	10	29	4	8	100

^aAcres farmed in 1983 including government idled acres.

^bWould have to be approved in farmer referendum.

^cTotal may not add to 100 due to rounding.

^dPercents are based on the following number of respondents by categories: 1-99 acres, 111; 100-249 acres, 116; 250-499 acres, 95; 500-999 acres, 52; 1000+ acres, 27, and all farmers, 424.

Source: Original survey data.

programs as perceived by farmers who farm over 500 acres. These farmers, in general, are more dependent on farm income as a source of family income than are smaller operators. Smaller operators generate a greater share of total earnings from off-farm sources. Thus, compared with small farmers, large farmers may perceive a greater need for the effect of farm programs on farm income.

Most Ohio farm operators are dissatisfied with the process used to make farm policy. Only 23 percent preferred continuation of the present system (Question 16, Appendix Figure 1). In contrast, 40 percent felt that producers should organize, control and finance their own supply management program without government involvement. Another 25 percent opted for a Presidentially-appointed, independent board operating under Congressional guidelines and composed of farmer, agribusiness, and consumer representatives.

Ohio farm operators appear to be less satisfied with the policy process than with the actual program. However, disagreement among farmers on what, if any, program should be implemented may underpin the dissatisfaction with the policy process. Disagreement over the future course of policy opens the policy process to increased influence by non-farmers. The farmers' role therefore is lessened and this is reflected as dissatisfaction with the policy process and as a desire to enhance farmer control through establishment of a different process.

Opinions Concerning Specific Policy Instruments

The current farm program is implemented through a variety of instruments including target prices/deficiency payments, acreage diversion, farmer-owned grain reserve, payment-in-kind, and payment for milk production cutbacks.

Support for continuation of these specific instruments, excluding payments for milk production cutbacks, was much stronger than support for the current farm program's general orientation (Table 3). Furthermore, support for a specific program was generally greatest among farmers most directly affected by the related programs (Table 3). For example, a majority of grain farmers favored continuation of target prices, paid land diversions, the farmer-owned reserve, and payment-in-kind if large grain stocks reappear. It should be noted that support for the farmer-owned reserve was broad. The support probably reflects its twin goals: (1) to support grain prices when supplies are large by encouraging farmers to store and (2) to moderate pressures for high prices by releasing stored grain when market supplies are relatively short.

In general, livestock producers were less supportive of most crop-program provisions than were grain producers. This probably reflects the fact that most of these programs directly benefit grain producers, and many can be viewed as having a price increasing impact on the cost of livestock feed. Also, as farm size increased, support for the individual crop-program instruments increased just as support for the current program in general increased.

Continuation of payments for reducing milk production was supported by only one-third of all farm operators. As expected, support was least among farmers who reported beef and/or hogs as their chief source of income. Dairy producers themselves were divided in their support; only three percent had no opinion. Forty-two percent agreed or strongly agreed that the program should be continued if dairy production remains excessive. On the other hand, 49 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with its continuation. Thus, the dairy program had little farmer support and relatively weak support among

TABLE 3. Percent of Farm Operators Who Support Continuation of Specific Farm Program Provisions by Most Important Source of Income in 1983, Ohio, March 1984.

Program Provision	Major Source of Income in 1983					All Farmers
	Grain	Half Grain, Half Livestock	Hogs, Beef	Dairy	Other	
	- - - percent ^a - - -					
Target Prices and Deficiency Pymts.	56	47	38	39	40	48
Acreage Diversion Payments	58	38	32	35	44	47
Farmer-Owned Reserve	51	47	51	49	53	51
Payment-in-Kind ^b	60	53	35	39	44	51
Milk Production Cutback Payments ^b	34	31	27	42	30	34

^a Percents are based on the following number of respondents by categories: grain, 203; half grain/half livestock, 45; hogs/beef, 65; dairy, 57; other, 43; and all farmers, 424.

^b Percent obtained by adding together the percents who strongly agreed and agreed that these program provisions should be continued if large grain stocks appear again or if milk production remains excessive.

Source: Original survey data.

dairy farmers. However, since the diversion program had only just begun at the time of the survey, dairy producers and other farmers may have since changed their opinions.

The last specific policy instrument investigated was all risk crop insurance, which was enacted in the 1981 farm bill. Producers pay about 70 percent and government about 30 percent of program costs. Forty-four percent of respondents expressed the opinion that this program should be retained as the program to address natural disasters (Question 9, Appendix Figure 1). This percent was a plurality by 22 percentage points. However, examination of the responses to Question 10 reveals considerable apathy and/or lack of knowledge concerning the Federal crop insurance program. Over 60 percent of respondents had no opinion or no response with respect to whether crop insurance was a good buy, provided adequate coverage, or was easy to understand. These responses may reflect the observation that historically natural disasters have not on average caused substantial losses to Ohio farmers and/or may suggest that a greater educational effort on crop insurance could be useful.

Opinions Concerning Operationalization of Specific Policy Instruments

The present Federal administration and other policy makers believe that current price support loan rates are too high and therefore discourage both domestic and foreign usage. One suggested remedy for this problem is to set the loan rate in relation to the average market price for the past three to five years. Fifty-two percent of the survey respondents agreed or strongly

agreed with this policy while only 25 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (Question 5, Appendix Figure 1). Thus, Ohio farm operators seem to support a more market-oriented loan rate.

A major concern to many is soil erosion. It has been suggested that farmers be required to follow recommended soil conservation measures in order to qualify for price and income supports. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this policy prescription (Question 7a, Appendix Figure 1). If enacted, this would represent a return to the principle established in the 1930s that farmers should conserve resources for the public good in return for public help.

A third policy issue is the distribution of farm program benefits among different sizes of farms. Past program benefits have been heavily skewed toward large farmers. This result has been questioned since large farmers, especially those with \$200,000 or more in sales, earn substantially more from farming than the national average family income. Yet, in the current situation, these are the farmers in the most financial difficulty and with the least flexibility to absorb losses with off-farm employment or other methods of injecting off-farm earnings.

Currently, there is a \$50,000 government payment limitation per farmer per year in the crop programs. Ohio farmers as a group expressed little enthusiasm for increasing this limit (Question 15, Appendix Figure 1). In fact, 45 percent preferred that the limit be decreased. As expected, opinions varied substantially by farm size. About 50 percent of respondents with annual sales less than \$40,000 wanted the limit reduced whereas only 19 percent of farm operators with \$200,000 or more in sales favored this action.

The same variation with respect to size was present in the responses regarding whether price and income support benefits should be targeted to farms with annual sales under \$40,000 (Table 4). The smallest farmers expressed a 75 percent preference rate for such a targeting policy contrasted with 12 percent for the largest farmers.

In summary, support for redirecting farm program benefits toward small and medium size farmers was strongly related to economic self interest, with small farmers favoring and large farmers opposing it. Thus, sector-wide support for a reorientation of program benefits was lacking.

Other Farm Policy Issues

Foreign agricultural trade emerged as an important issue during the early 1980s. Close to a majority of respondents expressed support for the following policies to increase farm exports: (1) match export subsidies of competitors, (2) encourage lower trade barriers by major importers, (3) establish a national marketing board, (4) promote bilateral trade agreements, (5) provide more food aid to hungry nations, (6) strengthen the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and (7) expand farmer-financed market development programs (Question 17, Appendix Figure 1). Considerable disagreement, however, existed over the merits of increasing exports by lowering U.S. support prices, forming an export cartel with other major exporters, or establishing a two-tier price plan with price support being offered only to domestically consumed products. Among the various trade prescriptions, it is notable that 63 percent of the respondents supported farmer-financed export promotion programs. This preference suggests that Ohio farmers would be receptive to additional federal initiatives on the promotion issue.

Table 4. Opinion of Farm Operators Concerning Whether Price and Income Supports Should be Targeted to Farmers with Annual Farm Sales of Under \$40,000 by Annual Gross Farm Income, Ohio, March 1984.

Annual Gross Farm Sales ^a (dollars)	Opinion						Total ^b
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response	
			- - -	percent ^c	- - -		
40,000 or less	45	29	8	12	2	3	100
40,001-99,999	26	27	10	20	13	3	100
100,000-199,999	13	15	20	35	17	0	100
200,000+	6	6	7	48	26	6	100
All Farmers	34	24	10	20	9	3	100

^a Annual gross farm sales in recent years.

^b Total may not add to 100 due to rounding.

^c Percents are based on the following number of respondents by categories:
\$40,000 or less, 205; \$40,000-99,999, 106; \$100,000-199,999, 54; \$200,000+,
32; and all farmers, 423.

Source: Original survey data.

One factor which will determine future growth of farm exports is the Federal budget deficit and its impacts on interest rates and the value of the U.S. dollar vis-a-vis currencies of countries that buy U.S. farm products. Most survey respondents were concerned about the deficit and believed it should be reduced in order to lower interest rates and reduce the debt burden on future generations (Question 18, Appendix Figure 1). In addition, over 70 percent agreed or strongly agreed that the deficit should be eliminated, even if it meant a substantial cut in all government programs including farm programs. However, by a plurality of 16 percentage points, the respondents did not want the deficit reduced by freezing expenditures and raising taxes. Thus, the deficit is a major concern to Ohio farmers. However, Ohio farmers do not want it solved by increasing taxes; they would support a reduction in federal expenditures including those on farm programs.

A program which has encouraged domestic food consumption and therefore strengthened farm prices is the food stamp program. Nevertheless, farmers historically have not supported this program. The lack of support was reconfirmed in this survey as 57 percent of respondents wanted the program reduced or eliminated (Question 19, Appendix Figure 1).

The current fiscal distress in agriculture has encouraged repeated calls for a moratorium on farm foreclosures. Others, have argued that such a policy would only reduce the loanable funds available to farm operators as lenders would move their funds to less restricted sectors. One particular institution caught in this debate is Farmers Home Administration (FmHA). The survey, therefore, asked what FmHA's policy should be toward its present borrowers. As a group, only 23 percent of the respondents supported an FmHA moratorium for either all distressed borrowers or young "deserving" farmers (Table 5).

Table 5. Opinion of Farm Operators Concerning the Desired Credit Policy for Farmers Home Administration by Debt-to-Asset Ratio, Ohio, March 1984.

Debt-to-Asset Ratio (percent)	Credit Policy					No Response	Total ^b
	Continue Present Policy ^a	Comprehensive Foreclosure Moratorium	Moratorium only for Selected Young Farmers - - - percent ^c - - -	Set Stricter Policy	Other		
0	50	12	10	23	4	1	100
1-25	54	12	7	21	5	2	100
26-50	45	17	7	24	6	1	100
51-75	55	21	8	16	0	0	100
76+	29	21	29	7	7	7	100
All Farmers	50	14	9	21	4	1	100

^aPresent policy is not to foreclose unless all repayment efforts have failed.

^bTotal may not add to 100 due to rounding.

^cPercents are based on the following number of respondents by categories: 0%, 173; 1-25%, 121; 26-50%, 71; 51-75%, 38; 76%+, 14; and all farmers, 424.

Source: Original survey data.

Support varied little when respondents were analyzed by off-farm income, farm size, and major source of income. In contrast, support for a moratorium increased as debt-to-asset ratio increased, particularly when it exceeded 75 percent. Since the latter is to be expected out of economic self interest, it can be concluded that widespread support does not exist for a moratorium on FmHA loans. A more encompassing package of financial relief might, however, garner broader support since more farmers would be helped.

Summary and Implications

Interest in and debate over the 1985 farm bill has been extensive. To ascertain how Ohio farm operators feel about some of the issues surrounding this debate, a random sample of 2000 farm operators was surveyed. Respondents generally mirrored the characteristics of all Ohio farm operators. One exception was the greater representation of large farmers among respondents.

The survey found substantial discontent with the current farm legislation but even more disagreement over alternative policy approaches. Respondents were evenly split between those who wanted strong government supply management programs, those who wanted government programs which act as a safety net, and those who wanted government out of farming. Support for the current legislation was greatest among farmers who farmed over 500 acres.

Support for specific policy instruments was generally greater than for the broad framework of the current legislation. Furthermore, those farmers most affected by a specific program were generally more supportive of that program than were other farmers. Support for the farmer-owned reserve was particularly strong among all types of farmers.

Among specific policy instruments examined, discontent was greatest with the milk diversion program. Furthermore, dairy producers were about equally divided on whether the program should be continued.

Concerning other issues, broad support was expressed for: (1) loan rates based on a moving average of market prices for the past three to five years, (2) a requirement that farmers follow recommended soil conservation measures in order to qualify for price and income supports, and (3) a reduced Federal deficit, but only by reducing government expenditures not by increasing taxes. Broad support was also expressed for many programs to increase exports including an increase in farmer-financed foreign market development programs. However, there was considerable disagreement over the merits of increasing exports by reducing support prices. Lastly, there was little sector-wide support for a moratorium on Farmers Home Administration loans.

The survey findings imply that, as concerns Ohio farm operators, continuation of the general philosophy and orientation of the present farm policy seems likely. The exceptions may be initiation of a soil erosion control program and reduced support for the dairy program. Operational changes which garner broad support include cross compliance between soil erosion control measures and price and income support benefits, discontinuation of the dairy diversion program, and setting the price support loan rate on the basis of a moving average market price. On balance, these changes would make agriculture more market oriented. Ohio farm operators also want to become more involved in programs to support the sector be it through self-financed export expansion programs or self-directed and financed price and income support programs. Taken as a group, Ohio farmers seem to want less government involvement in setting market parameters, but they recognize the need for programs, be they

government or private, which provide some insulation from the vagaries of the market place.

Appendix Figure 1. QUESTIONS ABOUT GOVERNMENT AND AGRICULTURE--OPINIONS OF OHIO FARMERS
MARCH 1984

Number of questionnaires mailed = 2000. Number of respondents = 423. Response rate = 21%. For questions 1-19 and 20a, b, c, d, e, f, and h, percent of total respondents who checked the item or category is reported. For some questions the percents may not add to 100 due to rounding.

1. What should be the policy toward production and price supports after 1985?

- (%) 33 keep present voluntary programs with minor revisions.
17 have a mandatory set aside and price support program in years of excess supply with all producers required to participate if approved in a farmer referendum.
10 re-establish acreage allotments and marketing quotas for each farm as a basis for price supports.
29 eliminate set aside, price support, and government storage programs.
6 undecided
4 other
2 no response

2a. Should target prices and deficiency payments be continued in the 1985 farm bill?

- (%) 48 yes 37 no 13 not sure 2 no response

b. If continued, where should target prices be set compared with 1984? (\$3.03 for corn; \$4.45 for wheat)

- (%) 30 higher 34 about the same 9 lower 10 no opinion 17 no response

3. Should payments for acreage diversion be continued in future programs?

- (%) 47 yes 38 no 13 not sure 3 no response

4a. Should a farmer-owned grain reserve be continued?

- (%) 51 yes 28 no 20 not sure 2 no response

b. If a grain reserve is continued, which policy below would you prefer:

- (%) 11 no limit on size of reserve
13 let the Secretary of Agriculture set the limit on the amount
50 set a limit based on a percent of the previous year's use
13 not sure
13 no response

5. Loan rates for all price supported commodities should be based on a percent of the average market price for the past three to five years.

- (%) 10 strongly agree 42 agree 18 not sure 16 disagree 9 strongly disagree
5 no response

6. The payment-in-kind program should be used again if large stocks reappear.

(%) 20 strongly agree 31 agree 10 not sure 20 disagree 18 strongly disagree

1 no response

7a. To help achieve national and state soil erosion control goals, each farmer should be required to follow recommended soil conservation measures for his farm to qualify for price and income support programs.

(%) 33 strongly agree 36 agree 7 not sure 13 disagree 10 strongly disagree

1 no response

b. How should federal government funds for soil conservation programs be distributed?

(%) 26 give funds to all states in proportion to number of farms
51 give more funds to those states with the most severe erosion
13 not sure
8 other
2 no response

8. The Farmers Home Administration was established to provide credit to farmers who could not get credit from other sources. Which credit policy should it follow with present borrowers?

(%) 50 continue the present policy of not foreclosing unless all repayment efforts have failed
14 provide a moratorium on all foreclosures to keep distressed borrowers operating until the economy improves
9 provide a moratorium on foreclosures only for selected young "deserving" farmers
21 set a stricter policy on delinquent loans and increase the number of foreclosures
4 other
1 no response

9. Which government policy would you prefer to deal with farm production risk from natural disasters?

(%) 44 continue present all risk crop insurance where producers pay about 70 percent and government pays about 30 percent of the cost
17 return to disaster payments where government pays all the cost
22 eliminate all disaster payments and Federal Crop Insurance programs
13 not sure
3 other
2 no response

10. Check below your opinions about the Federal Crop Insurance Program:

(%) a. 16 a good buy 22 expensive 44 no opinion 18 no response
b. 17 adequate coverage 18 inadequate coverage 36 no opinion 28 no response
c. 11 easy to understand 21 complicated 38 no opinion 30 no response

11. Future farm program should be changed to give most price and income support benefit to small and medium size farms with gross annual sales under \$40,000.

(%) 34 strongly agree 24 agree 10 not sure 20 disagree 9 strongly disagree
3 no response

12. If milk production is excessive in 1985, payments for production cutback by dairy farmers should be continued.

(%) 8 strongly agree 26 agree 17 not sure 23 disagree 23 strongly disagree
2 no response

13. By the end of 1985 how do you expect the number of milk cows on your farm to compare with the beginning of 1984?

(%) 70 do not have any dairy 4 more 6 less 12 about the same 0 no opinion
7 no response

14. If major changes were required in funding government programs, which would you favor?

(%) 41 a low "safety net" loan and target price program.
32 replace commodity programs with a farm income insurance plan with costs shared by farmers and government
15 other
12 no response

15. The present limit on direct payments to each farmer is \$50,000 per year. What recommendation would you make for the future?

(%) 8 increase the limit
38 make no change
45 decrease the limit
7 eliminate the limit completely
3 no response

16. Who should make the major farm commodity policy decisions?

(%) 23 continue the present system with Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture
25 have the President appoint an independent board or commission operating under Congressional guidelines with farmers, agribusiness and consumers represented.
40 let producers organize, control and finance their own supply management program without government involvement
8 no opinion
3 other
2 no response

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
17.	To increase export sales, the United States should:						
(%)	a. match export subsidies of its competitors.	16	34	21	10	5	15
	b. encourage lower trade barriers by major importers.	18	40	13	12	4	13
	c. lower U.S. support prices.	9	18	25	24	6	20
	d. establish a marketing board (such as the Canadian Wheat Board).	12	35	28	9	4	11
	e. promote bilateral trade agreements with minimum purchases and export guarantees.	9	50	24	4	1	12
	f. join an export cartel with other major exporters.	5	25	28	21	7	14
	g. provide more funds for food aid to hungry nations.	15	31	16	21	9	9
	h. strengthen the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to facilitate more free trade.	19	51	15	4	1	10
	i. expand farmer financed foreign market development programs.	17	46	13	9	4	10
	j. set up a two price plan with a higher price for commodities used in the domestic market and let exports sell at the world market price.	5	22	30	21	12	10

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
18.	Federal deficits have been running \$100 to \$200 billion per year.						
(%)	a. We should keep things as they are and not worry about balancing the budget.	2	3	3	36	48	8
	b. We should reduce the deficit in order to reduce interest rates for borrowers.	38	45	5	3	2	7
	c. Freeze present federal expenditures and raise taxes.	9	19	21	28	16	8
	d. We should reduce the deficit to reduce the debt burden on future generations.	38	49	5	3	1	5
	e. The federal budget should be balanced even if it means a substantial cut in all government programs including farm price and income supports.	41	31	11	9	5	4

19. Expenditures on food stamps have been around \$12 billion per year. What would you recommend?

(%) 6 increase amount 37 decrease amount 26 keep about the same
8 no opinion 20 eliminate completely 3 no response

20. To help analyze your answers, we would like to know a little about you and your interests:

a. Check the price and income support programs you participated in during 1983:

(%) Acreage Reduction: Wheat 23 Feed Grains 25 Did Not Participate
Payment-in-Kind: Wheat 40 Feed Grains 58 In any Program 42

b. Your age: (please check) 14 under 35 28 35-49 40 50-64 17 65 or over

(%) 1 no response

c. Number of acres farmed (including government idled acres) in 1983:

Mean = 372 0-99 acres 26% 250-499 acres 22% 1000+ acres 7%
Median = 197 100-249 acres 28% 500-999 acres 12% no response 5%

(%) d. Percent of land owned that you farm: Mean = 64; Median = 70; Mode = 100

e. Approximate annual gross sales from your farm in recent years:

(%) 49 \$40,000 or less 25 \$40,000-99,999 13 \$100,000-199,999 8 \$200,000+
6 no response

f. Your most important source of farm income in 1983:

(%) 48 grain 15 hogs, beef cattle 13 dairy
8 approximately half grain and livestock 10 other 2 no response

g. What was the last year of school you completed?

(%) 6 grade school 11 some high school 49 high school graduate
17 some college or technical school 16 graduated from college 1 no response

h. What percentage of your total assets is your debt?

(%) 41 0% 29 1-25% 17 26-50% 9 51-75% 3 76%+ 2 no response

i. If you or members of your family were employed off the farm, what percent of your total family income in 1983 came from off-farm employment and investments?

(%) 43 0-24% 9 25-49% 16 50-74% 21 75-100% 12 no response

j. Please check your membership in these organizations in 1983. Percent of respondents reporting membership.

<u>59</u> Farm Bureau	<u>10</u> Pork Producers
<u>8</u> Farmers Union	<u>12</u> Milk Producers
<u>10</u> Grange	<u>5</u> Corn Growers
<u>3</u> National Farmers Organization	<u>10</u> Soybean Association
<u>0</u> American Agricultural Movement	<u>2</u> Wheat Producers
<u>8</u> Cattlemen's Association	<u>8</u> Labor Union

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